

060624Z Dec 01

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PAGE 01 HARARE 03638 060717Z
ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AF-00 A-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
DS-00 EUR-00 UTED-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 LAB-01 VCE-00
NSAE-00 TEST-00 USIE-00 IIP-00 DSCC-00 DRL-02 NFAT-00
SAS-00 /003W

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0474
INFO NSC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS HARARE 003638

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX, ROBERTSON, AF/S FOR SCHLACHTER, AF/RA FOR
SWANN, INR/R/MR, NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [Z1](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT PRESS CRITICIZES INFORMATION BILL

[1](#)1. THE INDEPENDENT WEEKLY "THE STANDARD" USED ITS
DECEMBER 2 EDITORIAL TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT OF
ZIMBABWE'S NEW INFORMATION BILL. THE BILL IS NOW AWAITING
CONSIDERATION BY PARLIAMENT. UNDER THE TITLE "INFORMATION
BILL ABSOLUTE MADNESS," THE PAPER COMMENTS:

[1](#)2. "THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROTECTION OF PRIVACY
BILL. . .CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS ONE OF THE MOST
DEVIOUS PIECES OF LEGISLATION CRAFTED IN POST-
INDEPENDENCE ZIMBABWE, AND ONE WHICH SEEKS TO MAKE
CRIMINALS OUT OF OTHERWISE LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS.
INTRODUCED OSTENSIBLY TO GIVE THE PUBLIC THE RIGHT TO
INFORMATION HELD BY PUBLIC BODIES AND TO PROTECT
PERSONAL PRIVACY, THE ALL-EMBRACING BILL. . .WILL HAVE
THE NET EFFECT OF CURTAILING AND INTERFERING WITH ALL
ASPECTS OF A NEWSPAPER'S OPERATIONS. IN ITS PRESENT
FORM, ASPECTS OF THE BILL SEEK TO HAND OVER TO THE
GOVERNMENT POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT ARE VESTED
IN THE MANAGEMENT OF A MEDIA ORGANIZATION. . . SHOULD
THE BILL BE PASSED INTO LAW IN ITS PRESENT FORM, THEN
CLEARLY A MAJOR SHOWDOWN IS IN THE MAKING BETWEEN THE
GOVERNMENT AND THE INDEPENDENT PRESS."

SULLIVAN

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